ENTREPRENEURIAL COMPETENCY IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION: A VERITABLE TOOL FOR COMBATING RURAL-URBAN MIGRATION AMONG TERTIARY EDUCATION GRADUATES

E. I. Okeke

Abstract

Graduate unemployment has become one of the most pernicious problems staring the Nigerian youths on the face. It has in recent times reached an alarming rate with its effect manifesting daily. The blame was on tertiary institutions who have been producing graduates that cannot start or own a business due to lack of skills and sense of creativity. This paper therefore brings to light entrepreneurial competency as an indispensable tool for combating rural-urban migration and imbibing self-employment. Factors hindering entrepreneurship competency in agric education and problems of rural-urban migration were highlighted and recommended for improvement discussed.

Over the years, majority of the graduates form tertiary institution has always looked out for white collar jobs that are always difficult to come by these days but with entrepreneurial competency such students could be gainfully employed, self-reliant and also an employer of labour.

Obinna (2000) noted that our formal educational system in the recent past seem to be continuously turning out people who are ill prepared to help in the development of the country. It is a process of preparing people for non-existent white collar job.

The Nigeria educational curriculum in the universities, polytechnics, colleges of education are not adequate to prepare graduates to be self-sufficient. It is true that about 70% of business failures within our environments are attributed to lack of entrepreneurial competencies (Nwosu, 2006). However the curriculum of tertiary institutions in Nigeria currently lacks adequate entrepreneurial, components to prepare graduates to acquire saleable skills that would enable them explore and exploit business opportunities within their environment. Entrepreneurship as defined by Nwaokolo (2003) is the ability to set up and effectively manages an enterprise as different from being employed in paid employment.

Entrepreneurship is actually concerned with creating opportunities and meeting the needs of individuals. Kibly in Inegbenebor and Kurya (2006) stated that entrepreneurship is the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities to establish and run an enterprise. Koa and Stanton in Inegbenebor and Kurya (2006) opined that it is an attempt to create value through recognition of business opportunity and the management or risk taking appropriate to the opportunity and through the communicative and management skills to mobilize human financial and material resources necessary to bring a project function. In other words, it is those activities designed to produce an entrepreneur that is referred to as an entrepreneurship.

The high rate of rural urban migration, poverty, gangsterism, hooliganism, political assassination, and kidnapping in Nigeria are mostly caused by unemployment, poverty and lack of entrepreneurial skills.

Concept of Entrepreneur

Agomou (2006, stated that the entrepreneur is a person who undertakes and develops a new enterprise at some risk of failure or loss. He is the one who starts an enterprise, the one who puts new forms of industry on their feet, the one who shoulders the risks and uncertainty of using economic resources in a new way and with the right motivation, energy and ability to satisfy his customers and make profit.
Odah (2009) noted that the functions that is specific to entrepreneurs is the ability to take the factors of production, land, labour, capital and use them to produce new goods and services. Thus, the entrepreneur perceives opportunities that other business executives do not see or do not care about. The process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas and combining them with management skills in order to use people, money and resources to meet identified needs thus creating wealth best describes the functions of an entrepreneur (Oduma, 2009).

However, for the business man to be successful he needs special competencies to enhance his performance in the job. Therefore entrepreneurship competence in the context of this study indicates special qualities needed to enhance success in a business.

According to Olaitan and Muma (2001) to be competent means that the individual would have acquired the knowledge, skill and attitude required in order to be successful in the business.

Therefore integrating entrepreneurial competency in the curriculum of tertiary institutions will equip graduates of higher institutions with relevant skills, acute business knowledge, self-confidence and other attributes necessary for self-reliance and national survival (Thom-Otuya and Ikechi, 2009). It is a kind of curriculum in which entrepreneurial competencies will occupy a reasonable specialization, school programme or course of study irrespective of area of study. A kind of curriculum that can guarantee the satisfaction of competencies and skills in learners, the curriculum that help students to imbibe vocational and technical skills and knowledge, capable of inculcating the spirit of creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship for development.

Thus, entrepreneurial programme enables its beneficiaries to start business on their own because of the business knowledge, skills and creative abilities they have gained in the discipline. Osuala (2004) enumerated some roles of entrepreneurship as follows:

1. Provides graduates with training and support necessary to help them establish a career in small and medium businesses.
2. Provide graduates with training and skills that will make them meet the manpower needs of the society.
3. Provide meaningful education for youths which could make them self-reliance and subsequently encourage them to derive profit and be self-independent.

Agriculture remains the largest employer of labour in Nigeria and developing countries in Africa, Asia, Caribbean and Pacific (Abdullahi, 2001). It is the single most important vocation that remains intimate to the rural populace in the communities (Abba-Gana, 2003). Perhaps, without good agricultural development, consequent upon sound agricultural education (Ochu, 1991), the phenomena and associated catastrophes and crises of rural-urban migration will continue unabated and agricultural production will astronomically decline. Agricultural Education therefore has an essential role to play in reversing the falling socio-economic status of agriculture, by providing the youths with a sound knowledge of the basic principles and techniques of agriculture and the motivation, with agricultural productivity (Olaitan, 1987).

Hindrances to Achieving Entrepreneurship at Tertiary Level of Education

Achieving entrepreneurship competencies in tertiary level are faced with numerous challenges such as:

1. The curricular of tertiary institutions with respect to entrepreneurial component is questionable; the curricular is not well designed to prepare graduates for entrepreneurial life in the society. Thus, they are ill equipped to be self-reliant on graduation.
2. Hindrance caused by instructional strategy: instructional strategy predominantly used under entrepreneurship is the normal lecture method. Unfortunately, this method has not yielded positive dividends as students are not exposed to come into contact with practicing entrepreneurs with their environments. Adequate instructional strategy under good entrepreneurship demands that students be linked with the business world within their
environment. This will enable them to interact with successful entrepreneurs who possibly will influence their dream business and equally serve as a mentor.

3. Poor remuneration: Poor remuneration has been the cry of entrepreneur personnel. Lecturers are not well remunerated and motivated to teach, this result to their poor attitude to work. Our tertiary institutions are not well funded to provide enabling environment for students to go entrepreneurship fieldtrips to see and acquire practical knowledge to blend with classroom teaching and learning.

4. Inadequate fund: Funding of schools still come from government. Ulifun in Kwe (2004) stated that inadequate funding has become a hydra-loaded monster that cannot be conquered by government subvention. Due to this inadequate funding basic equipment are lacking in vocational institutions and workshops. Laboritories are either empty or stored with outdated tools and equipment.

5. Lack of skilled manpower: As part of the hindrances facing entrepreneurship development and training, Nworgu (2011) noted that there are inadequate qualified entrepreneurial teachers in the national education system. Entrepreneurship development, standard of living, potential economic growth and security of a nation depend to a large extent on the efficiency of its vocational education and training which will bring about development. There can be no development in a society that is lacking entrepreneurs or innovators who are prepared to risk their capital in business enterprise.

By implication personnel involved in the implementation of the training programme should be well exposed to the instrument of their professions to enable them cope with the modern methods of entrepreneurship development in agricultural education training.

Unemployment and Entrepreneurship Competency

Unemployment is a situation whereby someone who is willing to work at an existing wage rate is not able to find a paying job. Oduma (2007) further stated that unemployment is a state of joblessness or idleness of one with labour requirement, potentials, skills, attitudes and abilities. Unemployment relates to low productivity in many sectors of the economy caused by several interacting factors such as poor organization, poor training, mismanagement and fraud, with entrepreneurial competency such individual will be gainfully employed to earn a living.

Entrepreneurship Competency in Agric Education and Problems of Rural-Urban Migration

In recent times, it was observed that youth and unemployed graduates from rural settlement continue to migrate from their villages to cities where entrepreneurial opportunities do not exist. Entrepreneurial competency programme under the skill acquisition centres as a matter of urgency be directed to the rural populace, and should be designed to enable the rural dwellers to be able to visualize the various entrepreneurial opportunities that exist in this place.

Entrepreneurial competency programme, in the rural settlement should enable the unemployed to be competent in such skills like:

1. **Fish Farming**: Training on fish pond technique in an enclosure (earthen or concrete) built to retain water for the purpose of growing fish to table size for household consumption and for sale to generate income for self-reliance.

2. **Vegetable Production**: Techniques on vegetable like pepper, lettuce, carrot, tomatoes, onion and so on can be used under irrigated land to provide employable skills to the teeming unemployed youth.

3. **Bull and Ram Fattening**: This can be done using feeding and management options that can be applied for gainful investment.

4. **Hatchery Management Practices**: This could be possible through teaching the techniques of hatchery.

Conclusion

Since it is glaring that entrepreneurship competency is the answer to some of the problems of development in providing the needed skills that will help one set up a business of his or her own, if
graduates are properly groomed with entrepreneurial competencies and ability, it will go a long way in reducing unemployment syndrome, youth restiveness and other social vices.

**Recommendations**

1. The curriculum of tertiary, secondary and primary education should be restructured to embrace entrepreneurial competency.
2. Students should be motivated to develop interest in entrepreneurship education in order to discover their various talents.
3. Government should make loan available to graduating students who have viable business plan proposal.
4. Qualified teachers proficient in theory and practical should be employed to improve entrepreneurship development. In addition, entrepreneurs who had worked in industries for some years should be employed first to enable them bring their industrial experience in teaching and learning situation in the classroom.
5. There should be adequate supply of modern agricultural tools and equipment in schools and laboratories well established for practical demonstration.

**References**


Entrepreneurial Competency in Agricultural Education: A Veritable Tool for Combating Rural-Urban Migration among Tertiary Education Graduates


